

MONTANA ECONOMY AT A GLANCE

February 2004

UNEMPLOYMENT BY COUNTY

Not seasonally adjusted

	Feb. 2004*	Feb. 2003
UNITED STATES	6.0%	6.4%
MONTANA	5.1%	5.7%
Cascade **	4.9%	5.4%
Missoula **	4.2%	4.9%
Yellowstone **	3.7%	4.3%
Beaverhead	3.9%	4.4%
Big Horn	13.8%	20.1%
Blaine	6.2%	6.9%
Broadwater	5.4%	6.3%
Carbon	4.3%	5.1%
Carter	2.5%	2.7%
Chouteau	3.3%	3.4%
Custer	4.6%	5.3%
Daniels	3.6%	3.0%
Dawson	4.4%	3.5%
Deer Lodge	7.5%	7.0%
Fallon	3.5%	3.2%
Fergus	7.4%	7.7%
Flathead	7.4%	7.2%
Gallatin	2.9%	3.2%
Garfield	3.6%	3.4%
Glacier	12.4%	12.6%
Golden Valley	9.3%	8.7%
Granite	6.3%	7.7%
Hill	4.0%	4.3%
Jefferson	5.3%	5.1%
Judith Basin	5.2%	5.7%
Lake	8.0%	8.7%
Lewis & Clark	4.3%	5.0%
Liberty	3.5%	3.7%
Lincoln	14.3%	18.7%
McCone	3.4%	4.6%
Madison	4.9%	5.9%
Meagher	7.2%	7.0%
Mineral	8.9%	11.2%
Musselshell	7.5%	8.2%
Park	4.8%	5.4%
Petroleum	6.2%	6.9%
Phillips	7.1%	6.7%
Pondera	6.3%	5.0%
Powder River	6.5%	5.7%
Powell	6.1%	7.0%
Prairie	8.3%	6.0%
Ravalli	6.7%	6.9%
Richland	3.3%	5.5%
Roosevelt	7.5%	7.6%
Rosebud	6.0%	6.9%
Sanders	10.3%	10.4%
Sheridan	5.2%	4.4%
Silver Bow	5.3%	5.9%
Stillwater	3.1%	3.3%
Sweet Grass	2.7%	3.0%
Teton	3.7%	4.7%
Toole	2.4%	2.7%
Treasure	5.9%	7.6%
Valley	4.4%	4.7%
Wheatland	4.8%	6.1%
Wibaux	2.5%	3.3%

*February 2004 rate preliminary

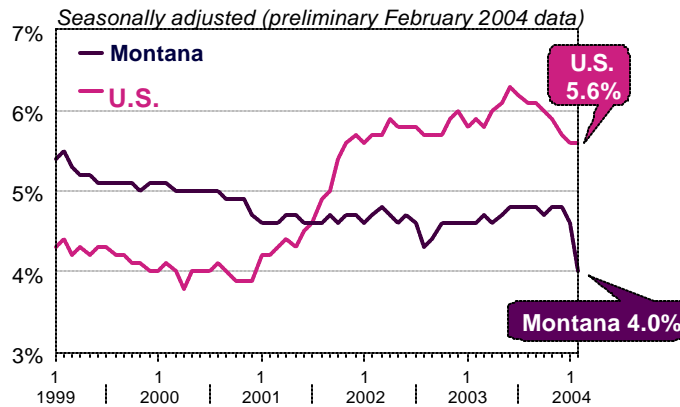
** Cascade=Great Falls MSA

Missoula=Missoula MSA

Yellowstone=Billings MSA

FEBRUARY 2004 HIGHLIGHTS

Unemployment

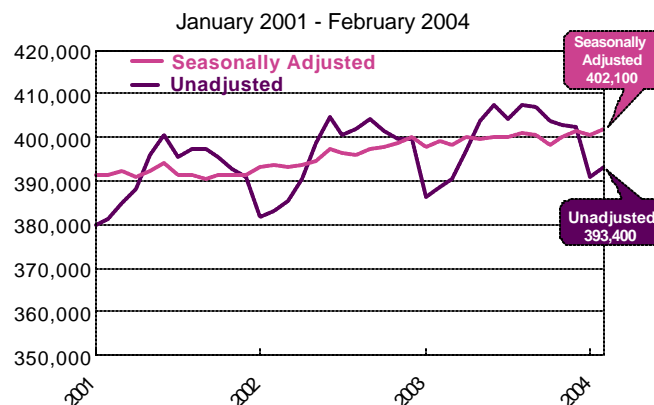


Montana's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate continues to be lower than the U.S. rate. The state's February unemployment rate of 4.0 percent was 1.6 percentage points lower than the nation's.

Earnings

Average weekly earnings for Montana's private sector production workers were up 3.2 percent over the year for February, outpacing the 1.7 percent over-the-year increase in U.S. inflation.

Nonfarm Employment Series



Montana's **seasonally-adjusted**, nonagricultural payroll employment was up about 3,100 jobs (0.8 percent) over the year for February. The largest over-the-year gains were in natural resources & mining; trade, transportation and utilities; professional & business services; and government.

CENSUS 2000

Who makes up Montana's current generations?

The Echo Bust generation (or Generation Z) is this month's highlighted generation, **and the last generation to be featured in our series.**

This generation includes people born from 1995 to the present and who were 5 years old and younger in the year 2000.

Census 2000 information shows that of the 902,195 people living in Montana, 66,452 were in the Echo Bust generation, 7% of Montana's total population. In Generation Z, 32,327 were female, 49%; and 34,125 were male, 51%. The chart below shows the Montana counties with the largest percent of the Echo Bust generation, 10% and above.

These all are counties with Indian reservations. The birthrate among native people is higher than for the non-Hispanic white population, which is the majority population group in Montana. (Refer to Montana Vital Statistics published by the Montana Department of Public Health & Human Services.) Find more Census information at:

<http://ceic.commerce.state.mt.us>

County	Number of Residents	Number of Echo Bust	Percent of Echo Bust
Big Horn	12,671	1,398	10
Blaine	7,009	672	11
Glacier	13,247	1,317	10
Roosevelt	10,620	1,032	10

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Employee Benefit Costs Outpace Wage Costs

The Employment Cost Index is an index of changes in employee compensation (see the May 2003 *Economy at a Glance* for additional information).

This chart shows that benefit costs increased at least twice as much as did wages and salaries in the United States. Montana specific data is not available. Here are the 12-month **percent** changes in the Employment Cost Index, not seasonally adjusted. (All percentage changes are from the previous December.)

	December 2002	December 2003
Compensation Component		
Civilian Workers		
Compensation costs	3.4	3.8
Wages and salaries	2.9	2.9
Benefit costs	5.0	6.3
Private Industry		
Compensation costs	3.2	4.0
Wages and salaries	2.7	3.0
Benefit costs	4.7	6.4
State and Local Government		
Compensation costs	4.1	3.3
Wages and salaries	3.2	2.1
Benefit costs	6.2	6.1

You can find the Employment Cost Index at <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/eci.toc.htm>.